

**California – April, 2007**

**Fair Trade vs Free Trade University**

**There are two kinds of politics in the world: the politics of love and the politics of fear. Love is about cooperation, sharing and inclusion. It is about the elevation of each individual to a life that is neither suppressed nor exploited, but nourished to rise to its full potential, for its own sake and so that we may all benefit by the gift of that life. Fear, and the politics of fear is about narrow ideologies that separate us, militarize us, imprison us, exploit us, control us, overcharge us, demean us, bury us alive and bury us dead in debt and sorrow. The politics of love and the politics of fear are now pitted against each other in a naked struggle that will define not only the 21<sup>st</sup> Century but centuries to come. We are the Sons and Daughters of Liberty in that struggle, indeed we are. Let us not shirk from the mission that fate has bestowed upon us as a blessing.**

**This struggle is real. A very close friend of mine, a college student named Lauren, spent last summer in Guatemala to help small communities prosper in ways that support their local**

**The two girls survived, but tens of thousands have not, because they are in the way of big business. It is not an honest difference of opinion, it is a global struggle of people versus a global crime syndicate that counts taken-over governments and multi- international corporations among its members.**

**There is a term now in common use in Latin America that is confusing to us Americans. It is called neo-liberalism and it is a very dirty word, indeed, among pro-democracy and fair trade groups down there. "Neo-liberal" sounds like the happy return of the Kennedys, but it is not. It is not about some resurgence of the liberal values of the Square Deal and New Deal and the War on Poverty or any of those things that called upon us to cooperatively address our largest needs as a free and self-governing people. The liberation that we have meant when we used the word "liberal" was the liberation from poverty, despair and ignorance the liberation of the mind through public education, the liberation of the citizen through universal voting, equal rights and equal opportunity, and the freedom to prosper from the fruits of our labors. But that is not the liberal that is meant by neo-liberal. It means newly free to rampage. It means free of government constraint.**

**It means free trade over fair trade. "Neo-liberalism" refers to the liberation of a giant beast that we, the ordinary people of America—the farmers, the townsmen and townswomen, the trade unionists—tied down to the earth early in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and it is that beast that has now gotten himself loose again to do great damage to us all. The deadly meanderings of this beast are most apparent in the most labor-intensive regions of the world, but the beast is here, too, and he has brought misery and suffering into our lives. Neo-liberalism is colonialism on crack, and sometimes quite literally.**

**How did we handle this evil giant before? The Teddy Roosevelt Progressives, and the William Jennings Bryan Populists before him, were part of a successful effort to tie down the giant. After the Civil War, at the high point of the Industrial Age and the age of railroads, oil and steel, great corporations and trusts were created that towered high over the human-scaled busses of America's Main Streets and cast dark shadows on human liberty and happiness. These monstrosities treated humans as slaves. They robbed the public wealth and were properly called the robber barons of that Gilded Age. These giants freely stalked, destroying the economics of family farms and**



**family businesses, corrupting our governments with great bribes and other deals, and polluting our food, our land and water and air. They tore our families apart and dragged us into the hardest of hard times.**

**I am not talking about all corporations or all big business. Corporations of reasonable size are but groups of people. Beyond some point, however, the humanity falls away from organization and all that is left is the will to power and profit. These are portable fascist regimes and they are a cancer upon our blue-green Eden. They care not that our seas and atmosphere are rapidly changing in ways that may lead to disaster and famine of unimaginable scale. They crush us under their boots and they pay off our political leaders with campaign contributions and other bribes. They trample on diversity of all kinds, including human personality, as fewer and fewer kinds of people can prosper in the world they are creating, and more and more are marginalized**

**What's happening is that the neo's in this Administration are starving government very much on purpose. Huge military commitments, huge tax cuts to the wealthiest individuals and corporations, and huge budget deficits leave no**

**money for the old New Deal programs. No money for schools, hospitals, police, fire, veterans—no money for anything but the front lines of a coporatized military . A starved government—once our government—has no ability to restrain the liberated giant or to investigate his abuses or prosecute his crimes. Two years after Enron, just one person went behind bars. It is not for lack of villains, and, as all California cries, it is not for lack of victims.**

**A century ago, the ordinary people of America joined together to tie down the giant. The antitrust laws and environmental laws and the rights of workers to organize and collectively bargain for wages and benefits all joined to nurture the restoration of a great middle class—always the bedrock of democracy. The robber barons, the great giants, remained tied down, no longer free or liberated, to do as they pleased in crushing us with their great wealth and political power. And so it was for a time.**

**And now, loosed again, these giants have taken over our television networks and most of our newspapers, turning them against our interests and against the truth itself. These giants send our young people off to fight their commercial wars—**

**great profitable ventures. Witness the hostile takeover of Iraq by Halliburton and friends, having bodysnatched the agencies of our government to do so.**

**How free are we now, friends? Check your bills and your bank account. How much time and leisure do you have to enjoy your life and friends? How is your place in your community as a free and equal citizen? Or are we drones that go to work, go to bed to rest for more work, go to the stores to spend all that we earn and more, and watch television to receive our instructions what to buy the next day, if we have jobs at all? Is that freedom by some other name? It is not freedom by any name and it is nothing to push on the rest of the world.**

**What shall we do, my friends, about these giants stalking our earth freely? How shall we get our children home from their wars and ourselves free from their captivities?**

**We must become the large counterbalance to these powers that our government no longer is. By communicating and acting in concert, we can reward the good companies and keep our money clear of the worst. We can make our demand for**



~~shed~~ and all eyes in the country are upon her, and many states will strive to become state #4. ~~So I~~ congratulate your Legislature, the first Legislature in the country to pass a Clean Elections bill, and *I Congratulate* your Governor Judi Rell for her part played in the passing of the bill and <sup>all</sup> wish you happiness in your new found freedom. Now all we have to do is to get 47 more states and we have to do it for our federal elections<sup>too</sup>—for the U. S. House and Senate. We have to repair the presidential system of public funding ~~as well.~~ *on public funding of elections*  
*Clean Elections*

*For Public funding of our State Elections*  
The way it works is this: if you want to run for an office, you must raise a certain number of \$5

contributions to demonstrate community support for your candidacy. When you have done so, the state provides funds for your campaign. The cost of the program is a fraction of what our present system costs, as today's campaign donors expect tax law changes, environmental law loopholes and direct industry subsidies in exchange for their campaign donations. They receive about ten dollars in public benefit for every dollar they pay to campaigns, so there is much to be gained by cutting out these middlemen and paying for our campaigns directly. Why on earth shouldn't the public pay for public election campaigns, anyway?



we were here, because we were alive, because we participated in a great democracy that led the world in bright new directions.

✦ What a wonderful challenging time in

which we live. A time when so much is at stake and when we all have so much important work to do in taking back our freedom from the Corporate world that has been created. And that you, personally, have an important role to play in this greatest drama of our time.

Don't let anybody tell you that it is impossible. You are ~~winning~~ winning if you are just out there trying, because you are the Center of the World.

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